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Chicago 7 Sentences Limited

CHICAGO, Nov. 17 (AP)—A U.S. District Court judge has set a limit on the contempt-of-court sentences that may be ordered for the "Chicago Seven" defendants and their lawyers and has dropped entirely the contempt charges against Bobby Seale.

The rulings were made Friday by Judge Edward T. Gignoux, who was sent from Portland, Maine, to hear appeals of contempt citations handed down at the end of the conspiracy trial.

The contempt charges stemmed from the actions of the defendants and the lawyers in the courtroom of Judge Julius J. Hoffman, who heard the case relating to disturbances at the time of the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

By limiting contempt sentences to no more than 177 days, Gignoux agreed with a government motion which sought to avoid jury trials on the contempt-charge appeals.

Contempt sentences of more than six months require a jury trial on appeal.

The charges against Seale also were dropped at the government's request.

An appeals court had ruled that if Seale were prosecuted for contempt, the government would have to reveal the contents of eavesdropping logs. The government refused, saying such disclosures would "endanger the national security."

Five of the defendants in the trial—which began in September 1969 and ended in February 1971—were convicted on charges that they individually crossed state lines to incite a riot.

Renard C. Davis, Abbott (Abbie) Hoffman, Thomas Hayden, David Dellinger and Jerry C. Rubin were convicted and sentenced to five years in prison and were fined $5,000 each. They are appealing the convictions.

Two other defendants—Lee Weiner and John Froines—were acquitted of all charges.

The defendants' lawyers, William Kunstler and Leonard Weinglass, were also held in contempt.

Judge Hoffman sentenced them to terms ranging from four years to two and one-half months.

Despite the rulings, Morton Stavis, attorney for the defendants and the lawyers, said he would press for a trail by jury on the contempt appeals.